

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition comprising:

- (a) a free-radical degradable polymer,
- (b) a free-radical inducing species, and
- (c) a free radical trapping species having at least two trapping sites,

wherein

(A1) the free radical trapping species (i) substantially suppresses degradation of the polymer in the presence of the free-radical inducing species and (ii) at a trapping site, being graftable onto the polymer after the polymer forms a free radical, and

(A2) the free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable composition yields a free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinked polymer.

2. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 1 wherein the degradation occurs by chain scission.

3. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 1 wherein the polymer being halogenated and the degradation occurs by dehydrohalogenation.

4. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 1 wherein the resulting free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinked polymer having a gel content as measured by xylene extraction (ASTM 2765) of greater than about 10 weight percent.

5. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 1 wherein the resulting carbon-FRTS-carbon polymer having a gel content as measured by xylene extraction (ASTM 2765) of at least about an absolute 10 weight percent greater than the gel content of the base polymer.

6. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 1 wherein the polymer is selected from the group consisting of butyl rubber, polyacrylate rubber, polyisobutene, propylene homopolymers, propylene copolymers, styrene/ butadiene/ styrene block copolymers, styrene/ ethylene/ butadiene/ styrene copolymers, polymers of vinyl aromatic monomers, vinyl chloride polymers, and blends thereof.
7. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 1 wherein the free-radical inducing species being an organic peroxide, Azo free radical initiator, bicumene, oxygen, and air.
8. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 1 wherein the free radical trapping species being a hindered amine-derived free radical trapping species.
9. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 8 wherein the hindered amine-derived free radical trapping species being selected from the group consisting of multi-functional molecules having at least two functional groups of 2,2,6,6,-tetramethyl piperidinyloxy and derivatives thereof.
10. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 9 wherein the hindered amine-derived free radical trapping species having at least two nitroxyl groups derived from oxo-TEMPO, hydroxy-TEMPO, esters of hydroxy-TEMPO, polymer-bound TEMPO, PROXYL, DOXYL, di-tertiary butyl N oxyl, dimethyl diphenylpyrrolidine-1-oxyl, 4 phosphonoxy TEMPO, or metal complexes with TEMPO.
11. (Canceled)
12. (Original) A free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition comprising:
 - (a) a free-radical degradable polymer and

- (b) a free-radical inducing species, and
- (c) a free radical trapping species graftable via a free-radical-initiated carbon-FRTS-carbon coupling bond to the polymer,

wherein the resulting rheology-modified polymer having a

$$\text{Maximum Torque} > 1.30 * \text{Minimum Torque}$$

measured by a moving die rheometer at the polymer's crosslinking temperature, a frequency of 100 cycles per minute, and an arc of 0.5 degrees.

13. (Original) A free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition comprising:

- (a) a free-radical carbon-carbon crosslinkable polymer,
- (b) a free-radical inducing species, and
- (c) a free radical trapping species having at least two trapping sites,

wherein

(A1) the free radical trapping species (i) substantially suppresses carbon-carbon crosslinking of the polymer in the presence of the free-radical inducing species and (ii) at a trapping site, being graftable onto the first polymer after the first polymer forms a free radical, and

(A2) the free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition yields a free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinked polymer.

14. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 13 wherein the resulting carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinked polymer having a gel content as measured by xylene extraction (ASTM 2765) of greater than about 10 weight percent.

15. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 13 wherein the resulting carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinked polymer having a gel content as measured by xylene extraction (ASTM 2765) of at least about an absolute 10 weight percent greater than the gel content of the base polymer.

16. (Original) The free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition of Claim 13 wherein the carbon-carbon crosslinkable polymer is selected from the group consisting

of acrylonitrile butadiene styrene rubber, chloroprene rubber, chlorosulfonated polyethylene rubber, ethylene/alpha-olefin copolymers, ethylene/diene copolymer, ethylene homopolymers, ethylene/propylene/diene monomers, ethylene/propylene rubbers, ethylene/styrene interpolymers, ethylene/unsaturated ester copolymers, fluoropolymers, halogenated polyethylenes, hydrogenated nitrile butadiene rubber, natural rubber, nitrile rubber, polybutadiene rubber, silicone rubber, styrene/butadiene rubber, styrene/ butadiene/ styrene block copolymers, styrene/ ethylene/ butadiene/ styrene copolymers, and blends thereof.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Original) A free-radical carbon-FRTS-carbon crosslinkable polymeric composition comprising:

- (a) a free-radical carbon-carbon crosslinkable polymer and
- (b) a free-radical inducing species, and
- (c) a free radical trapping species graftable via a free-radical-initiated carbon-FRTS-carbon coupling bond to the polymer,

wherein the resulting rheology-modified polymer having a

$$\text{Maximum Torque} \geq 1.30 * \text{Minimum Torque}$$

measured by a moving die rheometer at the polymer's crosslinking temperature, a frequency of 100 cycles per minute, and an arc of 0.5 degrees.

Claims 19-29 (Canceled)